

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 18-20 are pending. Claims 1-17 and 21 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowance of claims 19 and 20.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Takeshi et al. (JP 2003-059611). Claim 9 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Megumi et al. (JP 2003-022849). Applicants respectfully submit that since claim 9 has been cancelled, the rejections of claim 9 are now moot.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 12, 15-16 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takeshi et al. in view of Sato (USP 5,087,641) or Matsui et al. (USP 5,900,197). Applicants respectfully submit that since these claims have been cancelled, the rejection of claims 12, 15-16 and 21 is now moot.

Double Patenting

Claim 18 was provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 29, 30, 37 and 39 of copending Application No. 10/559,580. Applicants are submitting a terminal disclaimer together with this document. In light of the terminal disclaimer, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 18.

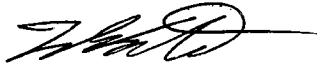
CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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